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REPORT OF THE SURVIVAL TRAINING EVALUATION TEAM

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At the request of the Air Training Command, a Special Task Group was assembled by the Office of Aerospace Research to study, evaluate and report on resistance training under the Survival Training Program at Stead AFB, Nevada. The Special Task Group was to operate under the terms of an Air Training Command Charter resulting from an exchange of correspondence originating from the Commander, Stead AFB, and involving Headquarters, Air Training Command, Headquarters USAF, and the Office of Aerospace Research. The Special Task Group was accompanied by Col. Robert L. Jones, Hq. USAF (AFPTR), Lt. Col. Sherwood F. Lapping, Hq. USAF (AFPTR), and Major Harold Welsh, Hq. Air Training Command. The Special Task Group was composed of the following:

Dr. Leonard C. Meak¹, Chairman, Tufts University¹
Col. Donald C. Almy, Hq. Air Force Systems Command (Recorder)¹
Dr. Martin T. Orne, University of Pennsylvania¹
Dr. Louis J. West, University of Oklahoma¹
Dr. John T. Lanzetta, University of Delaware¹
Dr. Albert D. Biderman, Bureau of Social Science Research¹
Col. James L. Monroe, Office of the Secretary of the Air Force
Dr. Herman J. Sander, Office of Aerospace Research
Dr. Robert E. Adamson, Office of Aerospace Research

Visits were made by this group to Randolph AFB on 24 February 1965 and to Stead AFB on 25-27 February 1965. Additional information, reflecting opinions of Classes 65-1 through 65-29 regarding their resistance training

¹ Evaluation Committee.

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experiences at Stead AFB, were subsequently collected by Dr. Biderman and made available to the Special Task Group during March 1965.

The specific questions to which the Group addressed itself were the following:

1. Is it possible to train individuals to resist interrogation?
2. How nearly adequate are the training methods, curriculum and procedures in the Resistance Training Phase of the Survival Training Program?
3. Does the Program meet the objective of DOD Directive 1300.7 which specifies training measures necessary to support the Code of Conduct?
4. Are there improvements which can be made in the Resistance Training Phase?

The following respective conclusions were reached with regard to these questions:

1. As a problem of applied behavioral science, it is possible by means of simulation to create a training situation in which an individual can improve his powers of resistance to enemy interrogation. Of course, not all individuals can learn to resist successfully under all circumstances.² The weight of evidence, however, does indicate that training under stress can provide the trainee with information as to what to expect if captured and also give the trainee attitudes of confidence and determination which will aid him in resistance to interrogation. It should be emphasized that the training must involve stress and that it must be difficult and arduous; without a dramatic, difficult and painful ritual (which the trainee passes successfully) the validity of the training experience would be diminished.

² See Report of the Air Force Advisory Committee on POW (Secret) dated November 1963.

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2. Considering the time available for the task, it would be preposterous for the Group to claim it had thoroughly and completely reviewed and evaluated the methods, curriculum and procedures in Resistance Training. We did carefully consider, however, both the classroom presentations phase as well as the field phase, and have studied the opinionaires from Classes 65-1 through 65-29. The course contents are relevant and up-to-date with respect to Communist methods of interrogation and coercive pressures; the instructors (in class and in the field) are knowledgeable, competent and enthusiastic; and the stress simulation (obstacle course, search and documentation, isolation and interrogation) portions of the program are, in the main, sufficiently realistic and stressful to provide a reasonable measure of retained learning for a possible future use. Our considered answer to the second question, therefore, is that the pedagogy is, indeed, adequate. Possible modes of improvement of the present Resistance Training phase are discussed under question four.

3. Is the Stead Air Force Base course consonant with DOD Directive 1300.7? The Special Task Group has studied this directive and compared its contents with printed instructional materials and the content of lectures and briefings given to the students in the Resistance Training phase. It is our opinion that the administrative and teaching staff at Stead have exerted special and continuing effort to make sure that their students are completely conversant with the Geneva Conventions and Executive Order 10631 (Code of Conduct) and strive to organize their curricular materials in accordance with DOD Directive 1300.7. Of especial concern here, of course, is the correlation between Article V of the Code of Conduct and the instructions on how to behave while under interrogation as a POW. The Stead curriculum presents and reiterates (in writing and

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verbally) the obligations of Article V; it makes explicit that the fighting man will evade answering questions beyond name, rank, service number, and date of birth "to the utmost of my ability" and that further responses are made entirely on his own responsibility. This opinion of the Task Group has already been made verbally to Col. A. E. Lackey, Commander, 3635 Fly Tng Wg.

There is some feeling in the Group that the DOD directive is being interpreted and applied too narrowly and rigidly, thereby detracting somewhat from full effectiveness of laboratory resistance training.³ It is felt that continued efforts should be made to structure laboratory situations so that trainees derive the experience of safeguarding information (and their integrity) while engaging in fully permissible communication with "aggressor" personnel. Ingenious attention to this matter is particularly necessary to avoid current feelings of dissatisfaction among the instructors who conduct simulated interrogations regarding their ability to carry through realistic and pedagogically valuable exercises. It would permit more shifting of emphasis in the laboratory from the crudest punishment tactics to more adroit forms of manipulation. It is the latter with which students are likely to be unfamiliar and hence most in need of familiarization experiences.

4. Are there feasible recommendations for improving the Resistance Training phase? Given increased time and funds, the staff of the School is well aware of a number of improvements which could be made. The conduct of this laboratory training is a task with most unusual demands for skilled,

³Additional guidance provided by AFPTR, Hq. USAF will assist in this regard. Some specific suggestions are being prepared for early distribution by the Office of Scientific Research under Contract AF 49(638)1344.

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knowledgeable, and extremely responsible personnel. This program cannot be carried out responsibly without provision for careful selection, training and replacement of instructors and other staff with attention to the special demands of the program. A sustained effort must be made to insure that the laboratory instructors in all cases have the level of knowledge, maturity and training that would be desirable for so sensitive a role. ATC personnel have expressed concern that there may be deficiencies in the provision for continuity of knowledge and experience in the direction and execution of the program. Assignments of military personnel with previous experience in the program and the use of permanently assigned civilians are two ways by which this takes place. There seems to be a need for more attention to both.

In the light of the importance that has been attached to this training program by the Hq. USAF, the Congress, the public, and the students who take the course, it appears that some additional study should be made of the extent to which the activity has been conducted on a "shoe-string" basis. The activity has been successful (principally) because of the zeal of persons associated with the program over the years. Labor outside of the ordinary demands of duty, and material outside of the ordinary supply channels, seem to have been in considerable measure responsible for the adequacy of the laboratory facilities. In view of the large costs to the Air Force of bringing the students to Stead and maintaining them there, the Group suggests that the priorities and balance of fund allocations to training facilities, training aids, equipment, staff personnel, research and evaluation may require review for adequacy. For example, the course does not have available to it a fully satisfactory training film on resistance to enemy exploitation. The closest approximation

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to such a training aid is a British film, but this is unsatisfactory in that it employs a ground force context and British colloquialisms, and its scope is quite limited.

But funding, time, and the availability of personnel are constraints which must be lived with. Given these "facts of life," the Special Task Group makes the following recommendations:

(a) Student participation and understanding of resistance techniques tend to be verbal and passive prior to the actual field exercises. We believe more student participation and feedback would speed and intensify the learning process. Thus the classroom lectures might be interrupted by "buzz sessions" to allow students to verbalize their growing concepts and anxieties. Similarly, during the field exercises, the more frequent breaking-in by the instructor (invoking an "academic situation") to correct a poor student technique or behavior would perhaps be better pedagogy than trying to maintain continuous realism without such interruption.

(b) Try to provide a graded series of stress experiences prior to the "realistic" simulation. These could consist of demonstrations, films, and role playing both as POW and interrogator.

(c) Attempt to establish and maintain the norm among interrogators that the objective is not to "break" the student but to insure a success experience. Interrogators should evaluate each other and possibly meet in small groups (at intervals) to discuss their procedures and "successes." At this time the group could be encouraged to reinforce the man who is most sensitive to breakdown and who is most adept at maintaining pressure without producing capitulation.

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As a final comment the Special Task Group would like to state that, while the present resistance training program is pertinent and to some degree effective, the Air Training Command should consider the institution of applied and basic research efforts towards its improvement. An active research program would provide necessary feedback and useful stimulation to the training effort. Questions such as the relative effectiveness of field exercises versus classroom training versus films in resistance training can, and should, be answered on an empirical basis. However, in addition to the very important support a research effort would provide for the ongoing training function, perhaps of even greater significance would be the basic knowledge that can be acquired in this setting. The program of resistance training offers an almost unique opportunity for basic studies on the problem of fairly acute stress as it affects the individual. Knowledge in this area is of vital importance to all the military services and might well prove to make a major contribution to a variety of problems both in the military and in civilian life. Serious consideration should therefore be given to the utilization of the resistance training program as a unique opportunity for stress research. A program which integrates social, psychological, physiological, and biochemical approaches to an understanding of stress should be developed. This might best be accomplished by the creation of an active program based at Stead or at Fairchild Air Force Base in close collaboration with scientists in academic institutions conducting studies in areas of mutual interest.

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